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### Background

This document contains information on the BONUS BALTCOAST project.

### Action requested

The meeting is invited to take note of the information.

## BONUS BALTCOAST – A Systems Approach Framework for Coastal Research and Management in the Baltic

Within the BONUS BALTCOAST project, a Systems Approach Framework (SAF) (for coastal systems) has been further developed and tested, with aim to enable a better transfer of scientific knowledge into ICM practice and shorten the time required from the identification of a problem or an opportunity to the implementation of solutions. For this, the BONUS BALTCOAST Systems Approach Framework provides guidelines and supporting tools for a stepwise approach that allows integrating different disciplines, scientific knowledge, practitioners and end-users in the process, covering the full cycle from the issue identification to the implementation of solutions.

Specific project objectives are to:

- Further-develop a Systems Approach Framework (SAF) for science and policy integration in the coastal zone into an applicable, user-friendly tool with high practical relevance that allows users to manage with multiple, complex, and diverse issues in the coastal zone and integration of spatial information and concerns;
- Tackle highly relevant thematic coastal issues (coastal erosion, tourism, bathing water quality, shipping, aquaculture & fisheries) applying the SAF;
- Further-develop and apply various tools that support the SAF application (e.g. stakeholder mapping, ecosystem service assessment, public participation, conceptual modelling, economic assessment);
- Integrate the SAF into existing policy frameworks (e.g. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, EU Integrated Maritime Policy, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Water Framework Directive (WFD), Natura 2000 as well as the Baltic Sea Action Plan);
- Carry out intensive SAF training and education for academics and professionals in order to increase the capacity to deal with complex coastal issues in a systematic way;
- Strengthen and link existing Baltic ICM activities and initiatives into a lasting Baltic coastal management competence network.

Main project achievements:

- Re-analysis studies of 16 existing ICM cases were carried out to assess to what extent SAF elements are already applied in practice within ICM processes in the Baltic. While participatory approaches and assessments of environment impacts were found to be commonly used in practice already, many cases failed to achieve a balanced and timely involvement of stakeholders and lacked an integrated, cross-sectorial and ecological-socio-economic assessment, leading to prolonged processes.
- SAF applications have been carried out within six case studies to test its practicability for different coastal issues. For this, all SAF teams in collaboration with local stakeholders have gone through the steps from Issue Identification to System Assessment (discussion of results and decision-making).

- Lessons learnt from the re-analysis studies and SAF applications were considered in the further-development of the BONUS BALTCOAST Systems Approach Framework. In addition, different supporting tools that can be applied throughout the SAF application have been developed, which can be used to guide the stakeholder involvement process. The updated SAF with its supporting tools will be made available in a user-friendly SAF manual in 2018.

BONUS BALTCOAST project website: <http://www.baltcoast.net>

